



MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
October 11, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 pm.

Present: Mayor: Charlie Miner; Council: Deirdre Kvale, Mike Feldmann, Jahn Dyvik (departed the meeting at 6:29 pm), and Gina Joyce (arrived to the meeting at 5:12 pm)

Staff Present: City Administrator: Scott Weske; Fire Chief: James Van Eyll; City Attorney: John Thames; and City Clerk: Jeanette Moeller

Absent: None

APPROVE AGENDA

A motion was made by Dyvik, seconded by Feldmann, to approve the agenda as presented. Ayes: all.

OPEN CORRESPONDENCE

Cody Farley, 328 Dupont Street – Mr. Farley commented that he felt it would be foolish for Long Lake and Orono to continue down the road of long-term fire services apart from each other. He indicated that he understood there are issues to be addressed, but would like to see a mainstay as the cities move forward to be that they do so together. He noted that if the City takes a look at long term fire service without Orono, he hopes that is considered with a realistic lens and that consideration is given to what that would mean in terms of costs, equipment, and firefighters with that approach. He added that he would ask the Council make sure information on this issue gets passed along to the City's residents. He also recommended that the City not pursue a Joint Powers Agreement because that term seems to be a toxic word in Orono and he felt a better approach may be some sort of shuffling of the assets between the two cities. He reflected that he understood the future of fire services is an emotional issue and admitted that he also did not want to see the City lose the Long Lake Fire Department, but observed that he felt the facts should guide the decision moving forward and not just emotions.

Marty Schneider, 1176 Wayzata Boulevard W - Mr. Schneider agreed with comments shared by Mr. Farley encouraging the Council to take all factors into account and do their research. He noted that he had encouraged others to reach out to the City Council and believed some communications may have been sent to Council members via email earlier in the day. He felt that the residents who'd attended the last Council meeting had left with the impression that a next level of due diligence would be pursued to include public involvement. He observed that the future of the Fire Department is a very passionate and emotional issue and suggested that perhaps the people that are so emotionally involved need to take a step back. He noted that Orono had done this a few months ago when they switched out their primary Council points of contact with the negotiations. He mentioned that the presentation put together by Council member Dyvik that was given at the last meeting was very detailed and included many factual points. To him, many of the statements that have been made by Orono bear no connection to facts and almost seem slanderous and defamatory, which just boils up the emotions for all parties. He stated that the City hires specific

consultants for specific reasons and suggested that it may be worth considering bringing this matter to the level of somebody actually negotiating and working on this situation with specific contract law in mind. He believed that the community would share that opinion, and noted that he had read the fire services contract recently and there does not appear to be a clear exit strategy for either city. He read aloud a statement that he had submitted to the Council by email that morning which asked that there be time allowed for Long Lake citizens to understand what is happening, organize, and to respond with their input. He reiterated that he would agree with comments made by Mr. Farley and asked that the Council assess all aspects of this situation and take them all into account before offering a definitive response.

Janet Schaefer, 1176 Wayzata Boulevard W (Submitted by Email) - City Clerk Moeller read aloud the following comment received from Ms. Schaefer:

"Dear Mayor Minor and Members of the Council,

First and foremost, I would like to thank you for your strategic and resilient stance of protecting the assets of the Long Lake Fire Department for the citizens of Long Lake and beyond. I know this ongoing negotiation for the attempted takeover by Mayor Walsh has taken a toll on you and your families.

While frustrating for all, I must relay that I am adamantly opposed to turning over control of the Long Lake Fire Department to Orono.

I strongly urge you to follow through on the process you articulated at the October 4 Council meeting. This was outlined to be very inclusive of the public.

Please know I and many others look forward to standing behind you in this public process. It should also not be assumed that a few select firefighters speak for the entire Long Lake Fire Department and/or the citizens of Long Lake.

Thank you for your service and perseverance."

Cody Farley, 328 Dupont Street - Mr. Farley spoke again to state he would encourage the Council to take a look at the current offer from Orono and evaluate whether it is a good offer for the City. He reiterated that he felt it is very important that when the City distributes information to the residents, they describe what the Fire Department would look like without Orono, because he believed it would be a hollow shell of what it currently is.

Marty Schneider, 1176 Wayzata Boulevard W - Mr. Schneider asked whether residents could be informed of the process from the current point forward. He noted he understood that the Council would be moving into a closed session and asked if decisions would be made following the closed session or if they would go to the Council meeting next week.

City Attorney Thames explained that the City Council's intent will be to enter into closed session to determine that direction. He added that he would be hesitant to indicate any direction prior to the closed session because the Council is still weighing their options currently, but confirmed that the outcome of discussions would be made public.

Mr. Schneider questioned whether the Council could make a decision to counter the offer from Orono without any further awareness by the public.

Thames responded that the Council can direct staff to follow up in whatever direction they choose, which again, would take some development and discussion during the closed session.

Council member Dyvik shared that the Council is looking at budgetary scenarios and will evaluate the financial impact of the different options, including a buyout scenario. The Council intends to review all the options that are on the table, but he believed the Council would be offering a public input opportunity.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Closed Session Pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.05, Subd. 3 (c)(3): Develop or Consider Offers/Counteroffers for the Purchase or Sale of Real Property Located at 340 Willow Drive N and Other Fire Department Property

A motion was made by Miner, seconded by Dyvik, to move into a Closed Session pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.05, Subd. 3 (c) (3) to develop or consider offers/counteroffers for the purchase or sale of real property located at 340 Willow Drive N and other Fire Department property. Ayes: all.

A motion was made by Miner, seconded by Feldmann, to adjourn the Closed Session and reopen the work session meeting. Ayes: all.

Mayor Miner indicated that the Council had just concluded a Closed Session during which they gave direction to City Attorney Thames to prepare a letter to respond to Orono in reference to their letter from September 26, 2022.

Discussion Regarding Fire Department Matters

Mayor Miner reported that during the Closed Session, the Council had decided on a date for an Open House to solicit input from the community regarding the future fire services situation to be scheduled for Thursday, November 17, 2022 from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at Fire Station #1. He asked if the Council wanted to invite all residents within the fire service area or just Long Lake residents. He noted that a multiple community mailing may need to involve using a company to get notices out.

Council member Kvale inquired if it would be possible to just send out notices to residents that are within the Fire Station #1 area.

Moeller clarified that she only has information for the City of Long Lake residential mailing list in the framework of mailing labels. The mailing for Long Lake residents would be sent to approximately 690 households, and she voiced concern that if they directly invite another 1,000 households, there may not be room for attendees. She suggested sending a direct mailing to Long Lake residents only, accompanied by notice also being sent out on the City's ListServ including a statement that all residents of the service area are welcome. She would also plan to publish notice in the local newspaper, and would reach out to Medina and Orono and invite them to share notice of the Open House as well.

Mayor Miner responded that he thought that communication plan would work, and suggested that they also try to utilize forums like 'Next Door'. He asked if the Council felt that they should hire a consultant to help with the process of getting flyers out to residents.

Moeller indicated that if she received the appropriate text for the invite, she could handle the notifications.

Council member Joyce volunteered to draft language for the invite for Council to review at their next meeting.

Council and staff discussed information that could be available and shared at the Open House meeting to help solicit feedback; and prepared for the possibility of moving the meeting out to the vehicle bays if attendance were to exceed the available training room space.

Moeller cautioned the Council to be mindful that information shared by Council members at the Open House would likely get back to Orono, and suggested members remain cognizant of whether there is any position they may be concerned about exposing as they draft information for their presentation.

OTHER BUSINESS

Tents at Lakeview Avenue Residence - Moeller reported she had received complaints regarding a tent 'encampment' on a rental property on Lakeview Terrace. She had confirmed that the tents were erected in observance of a one-week religious event.

Utility Agreement Correspondence – Mayor Miner indicated that there is a new email he had just sent to the Council related to the Utility Agreement with Orono. He advised Council members that there has been some question about whether or not Orono had installed meters that they promised to install in 1981, and he had just forwarded an email regarding that situation.

Upcoming Council Meeting Schedule - Council member Joyce asked about plans for the October 18 meeting schedule. Moeller replied that the EDA meeting has been cancelled with the idea that the Council would hold a work session meeting prior to their regular October 18 meeting to continue discussions regarding the Fire Department and also, possibly, to review some budget information. Council member Joyce reminded the Council that she would not be in attendance at the November 1, 2022 meeting. Mayor Miner also advised Council that he would be out of town for the October 18 meetings.

Administrator's Vacation - City Administrator Weske shared a few highlights of his recent vacation to London, England.

ADJOURN

Hearing no objection, Mayor Miner adjourned the meeting by general consent at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Weske
City Administrator